

VERSES

Intended to the

King's Majesty,

BY

Major *GEORGE WITHER*,

Whilst he was Prisoner in

NEVV GATE:

Which being found Written with his own
Hand, among his loose Papers, since his
Commitment close Prisoner to the

TOVV ER

Are now Published, as pertinent both
to his MAJESTY, and to Him,

LONDON, Printed in the year, 1662.

John Branton
his Book written

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VERSES intended to the KINGS
MAJESTY, by Maj. Geo. Wither,
when he was Prisoner in Newgate; and
found among other loose Papers, written
with his own hand.

SI R, though I neither of your *Grace* despair,
Nor lack sufficient *Faith*, to make a *Prayr*
In Court: yet, wanting means to prosecute,
I'll trouble you at this time, with no *Suit*.
But, treat of somewhat, that no more will cost,
Save *Labour*, (which I many times have lost,)
And, thereby, not been made a jot the worse,
Either in *mind*, in *body*, or in *purse*.

When *Rebels* did King *David's* flight constrain,
And, GOD was pleas'd to bring him home again,
They, who to drive him out, had forwardst been,
Made hast to joyn with those who brought him in.
And, he, with GOD, in *Mercy* so comply'd,
That, not one man for that *Rebellion* dy'd,
In following *Absalom*, who had contriv'd
The *Treasure*, and well-meaning men deceiv'd.
A traitorous *Child's* life, that *Rebellion* cost;
But, by our *War*, a *Fathers* life was lost;
And therefore, though some bloodshed have produc'd,
In humane Reason you may be excus'd,
Whom natural Affection mov'd to shed
The blood of some, by whom your *Father* bled;
Since you more *Mercy* freely have bestow'd
Than *David*; or your *Follwers* would have shown.

Which

Which much augments your *Honour* : For, no *Jew*
 So beautifies a *Royal Diadem*,
 As *Mercy*, when it is enameled
 With *Justice*, and with *Prudence* riveted.

I had presum'd a *personal Address*
 Long since ; but, difficult is an *Access*

*(Non cuivis homini contingit
 adire Corinthum.)*

For such as I appear, who hazard blame,
 And disrespect enough, where I now am ;
 Because, what *Conscience* chargeth me withal,
 Is by some judged to be *criminal*.
 In that regard, this *Paper* must make way
 For gaining an *admittance*, as it may ;
 And will, I hope, presented be, by some
 Who shall have entrance, where I cannot come.

I am despoiled so of ev'ry thing,
 That nothing for a *Present* I can bring
 Except (of *Grace*) your *Majesty* shall please
 To daign acceptance to such *Gifts* as these ;
 Which (though but mean, and in an homly dress)
 Will then illustrate your *true Worthiness*,
 As amply, as the candid *Acceptation*,
 Of what may seem of greater valuation.

I cannot write *strong Lines*, with swelling words,
 Whose *Elegancy* scarcely room affords
 For *sober sense* ; nor muster up their *Names*,
 Whom *History* and whom *Tradition* fames
 For brav'st *Achievements*, since time first began,
 And then say, you have all of them outgone ;
 As if my *foolish words*, might add unto
 Your *Honour*, more than your own *Deeds* can do.
 Or, as if any *Wise-man* would give creed
 To what they in a *flattering Poem* read.

It is not in the pow'r of any other
 By *Pen* or *Tongue* to clear up, or to smother
 Your true *Deserts*; For, in your self that lies,
 VVhich either them beclouds, or dignifies.
 No other *Thoughts* I entertain of You,
 But such as I may think, and you allow:
 Yet, to extol your *Worth* I shall not dare,
 Till I know truly what your *Virtues* are.
 For, though to *Flatters* all *Kings* seem to be
 Of like desert, they seem not so to me.
 I'll serve you faithfully in what I may,
 And, as my *King*, love, honour and obey.
 I would conceal, not publish your defects,
 If I knew any; and give due respects
 To all your *Merits*; but, I will not own
 One *Line* that praises them, till they are known:
 For, till I know, I give but what is due,
 I am a *Liar*, though my words be true;
 Since equally, both good and evil things,
 Are famed of the best of men, and Kings.

A *Stranger* likewise, you have been long time
 To most of your own Subjects in this *Clim*,
 And, I was never where I did behold
 Your face, since you were two or three years old:
 VVhat Good soever therefore I have
 Of you, I shall but seem a *Flatterer*.
 Yea, you your self would think so, should I add
 Those *Virtues*, which you know you never had;
 And, *Praise*, which is ascrib'd to any one
 In that *mood*, is a little less than none.
 But, little *Credit* also hath a *Power*,
 To celebrate your *Worth*, when he shall know it
 Or counterpoize, or silence *Commendations*;
 Since most esteem his *Writings* to be *Fictions*;

And

(2)
And you will be more honor'd, than in them,
By these *blunt Lines*, if they have your esteem.
I therefore, so shall study to increase
Your Honour, that I may not make it less;
And whatsoever I can say or do,
(Although you give a *Countermand* thereto)
I'll say, and do it; when I shall be sure
Your *Life*, or *Peace*, or *Honour* 'twill secure;
And, if this be a fault, I do intend
To be thus faulty, till my life shall end.

I know, most Royal Sir, who 'tis that saies,
* To please great men, deserves not meanest praise:

* *Principibus placuisse Viris, non ultima laus est.*
Hor. Epistol. 17.

I see how 'tis approv'd, and what they gain
Who can that thriving Faculty attain.
Yet, I shall wave their Art, and will assay
To do you honour in another way,
By giving you occasion to express
Your Justice, Mercy, and your Prudentnes;
So that your self may make the world to see
Your Virtues more, than words can say they be.
To that end, much might in my case be shown;
But, rather for your sake, than for mine own
Is this Address; Yea, rather to prevent
What may be your harm, than my detriment.

*Coram Rege suo, de paupertate placentes,
Plus, poscente ferunt.* Hor. ibidem.

To tell our Wans, or Grievances, to Kings,
Sometime, lesse remedy, than Silence brings.
He therefore wave that too; that no self-end
May frustrate what I chiefly do intend.

Some,

Some, questionless, before your Restoration
 Contributed for your Accommodation
 In true sincerity; and some, no doubt,
 Thereby to work their own Salvation out;
 And many a one, perhaps, like Ziba sped,
 VWho merited no better than he did.
 Some other would have done as much as they,
 But, neither had the means, nor knew the way;
 And many, who against You then combin'd,
 Are now, so truly of another mind,
 That, you in them are safe: for, Love in such
 Will much abound, who were forgiven much.

I, who obeyed late preceding Pow'rs
 Compulsively; now, willingly to yours
 Profess Allegiance; and, as true as those
 Will be, who of their Truth make fairest shows.
 For, when I saw G O D on your side appear,
 I was reclaim'd by Conscience, not by Fear;
 Yea, I foresaw, and likewise did foretell
 (To them who were in pow'r) what since befell,
 Attending passively, what I expected,
 By Providence divine would be effected:
 And my professed Loyalty to you
 Is not alone unquestionably true,
 But also, may appear to be more free
 From self-ends, than their Loyalty can be
 In whom you most confide: For, they from Bands
 Exempted are; have Honours, Goods and Lands,
 Pensions or Offices, wherein you do
 Protect them; and, they have your Favour too.
 But, all these wholly are to me destroy'd,
 And I by your Protection have enjoy'd
 Nought, save a dying-life, a living-grave,
 Or that, whereof so small esteem I have,

That, if my *Work* were done, and GOD would say
Amen, I would resign my *Life* this day.

Yet, so far am I from repining at
 My *Portion*, or my seeming sad estate,
 That, in this *Posture*, I will serve as long,
 As to endure it GOD shall make me strong;
 Not doubting, but when all things come to proof,
 My *Sufferings* will be much to my behoof:
 Mean time, lest otherwise, my good intent
 To you, some *casualty* may prevent,
 I will, so far forth as my *Chain* will stretch,
 (And mine now shorned arm and hand will reach)
 Exhibit such *Expedients*, as from *Time*,
 And other Herbs, I've suckt within your *Clime*;
 And, wanting better Gifts, will offer you
 This little Cluster of those *Grapes*, which grew
 Upon my *wither'd Vine*: For, though they are
 But sowre, your *Kingdom* yeelds none wholsomer,
 If you shall seasonably press out the Juice,
 And then assume it without prejudice.

This *Time* is critical; The *ways* be ruff,
 And many of those *Chariot-wheels* fly off,
 By which your *Marches* expedited seem'd,
 And lost Advantages must be redeem'd,
 Lest when you think that they are come to hand,
 Your main *Expectances* be at a stand,
 Or, put so far back, that you may survive
 Your hopes, and your own happiness outlive.
 I wish it otherwise; and know it may
 Be as I wish, if you the means assay,
 Not giving ear to those, who will withstand
 Your *Good*, & that which GOD hath now in hand.

I have

I have discharg'd my *Conscience* ; and so shall,
VVhatsoever for so doing doth befall,
In hope that will not wholly be dispil'd,
Which now shall be in faithfulness advis'd.

To those men do not over-much adhere,
Who think all *Wisdom* lies within their speare ;
For, *Honours*, *Riches*, and *self-Interest*
Have made *wise-men* as brutish as a Beast.
Heed ocherwhile, what *Common Fame* doth say,
Aswel as what your *Courtiers* whisper may ;
Lest you be ignorant of many things,
Whose cognizance is pertinent to *Kings*.
Make no man your chief *Confident*, but he
That's both *discreet*, and *honest* known to be ;
Lest he deceives your trust, and in the close
Destroyes your *old Friends*, or begets *new Foes*.
Let *Justice* be your *Scepter*, let your *Crown*
Be *Mercy* ; and, if you would keep your *own*,
Give that to *others*, which to them belongs,
And free the *Poor* and *Fatherless* from wrongs ;
Especially, your main Endeavours bend
To make and keep your *Sov'reign Lord* your friend,
And if you would be settled on your *Throne*,
Take care that His usurped be by none.
Enjoy your *Conscience*, whatsoere it be ;
So other men may have their *Conscience* free ;
And, hang me for a Traitor, if thereby
You then enjoy not more *Security*, (gives,
Than what your *Strength* by *Sea* and *Land* now
And all that *humane Policy* contrives.
Let *Truth* and *Error* fight it out together,
Whilst *Civil Peace* disturbed is by neither ;
Which may be so provided for, that none
Shall justly be displeas'd with what is done ;

For you hereafter be (for evermore)
Disturbed, as you have been heretofore.

If You neglect this, and I disobey,
I will be with much grief, and no other way,
But only *passively*, and whatsoever
I suffer, will your *Welfare* still endeavour.
To be of this mind, thousands are believ'd,
VVho are not into favour yet receiv'd:
And whilst they are excluded (though in *peace*
They live), *suspensions* daily will encrease;
And from their *Malice*, who not G O D, nor King,
Much care for, some *ill consequence* may spring,
By which You may have trouble, and they blame,
VVho shall be no way guilty of the same.

Your taking timely *Opportunities*
Now offered (and, of what before You lies)
May render You a blessed *Instrument*,
In making passage to that *Government*
VVhich *Tyrants* fear; more glorious make Your
Than ever any King yet sat upon: (*Throne*
And make Your *Name* a terror to all those
VVho to that *Kingdom* shall continue Foes.
Herein I've spoken according to my creed,
Wishing my *just hopes* may thereon succeed;
And that upon Your heart it may work more,
Than what I've spoke to others heretofore.

But G O D's time is at hand; within his power
Are all mens ways; yes, both your hearts & our;
And I will patiently submit unto
VVhat either He or You shall please to do,
Not asking (whatsoever I seem to want)
Ought more, than you spontaneously shall grant:
For, what I may expect, if you deny,
G O D shall be, G O D will supply.

These

(13)
These words, when I was young, my *Motto* were,

[*Nec habeo, nec careo, nec curo.*] 1612

(Thus English'd) *I nor have, nor want, nor care:*

So are they now I'm old; yea, somewhat more
Essentially than ever heretofore;

And thereof I will not abate one Letter,
Till GOD and You direct me to a better.

The *Liberty* I covet to enjoy,
Is that which no man living can destroy.
The *Wealth* I aim at, is nor less, nor more,
But to be well contented, Rich or poor:
And, if I had a mind my *Wiss* to strain,
That I to earthly *Honours* might attain,
I should to no such *common heights* aspire,
As now are objects of most mens desire;
Or, to a stile of so mean consequence,
As is an *Earl*, a *Marquess*, *Duke* or *Prince*;
Or, to be call'd your *Cousin*: For, no less
VVould satisfie my large *Ambitionness*,
But so much *worth*, at least, as did commend
His *Loyalty*, whom *David* call'd his *Friend*,
And *wis* enough to make a parallel
Of ev'ry *Traitor*, with *Achishophel*:
Or, show to you, the difference 'twixt the Faults
Of all your *Ziba's*, and *Mephisophims*.
For, then you should in very short time see,
That no man more deserves esteem'd to be

Newgate,

Mar. 22.

1662.

Your Majesties loyal Subject

Thos. Geo. Wither.

FINIS

Geo. Wither